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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

February 12, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Daniel K. Elwell
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Secretary Chao & Acting Administrator Elwell,

Today marks the 10th anniversary of the tragic crash of Flight 3407 near Clarence Center, New York. Thanks in large part to the extraordinary advocacy and leadership by the families of those who lost their lives, over the past decade we have achieved a number of major safety improvements for commercial air travelers. These include new rules governing flight and duty time limits, Safety Management Systems, crewmember screening and qualifications, and crewmember training. Additionally, airline ticket issuers must now disclose flights that are operated by regional air carriers.

Despite all of this success, there is work important that still needs to be completed to achieve one level of safety for all passengers and crews. In particular, it is completely unacceptable that the Pilot Records Database has not been fully implemented. Section 203 of the *Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010*, which we worked hard to enact, required the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to establish an electronic Pilot Records Database no later than April 30, 2017.

The failure to complete timely implementation of a fully functional Pilot Records Database continues to put lives needlessly at risk. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation into the cause of the Flight 3407 crash found that the airline did not have full knowledge of the captain's complete training record. The NTSB also found that the cause of the crash was the pilot's inappropriate response to the activation of the stick shaker, which led to a stall from which the aircraft was unable to recover. It is critical that airlines have access to a pilot's full records when recruiting and hiring individuals to pilot commercial aircraft.

This common-sense solution has the potential to prevent the future loss of life resulting from an unqualified or improperly trained pilot in the cockpit. We urge you to end the foot-dragging by the FAA and ensure that the electronic Pilot Records Database is fully implemented without further delay.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and we await your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator